

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AU, YU
SUBJECT: KREISKY CONTINUES ZIG-ZAG COURSE ON SLOVENIAN
MINORITY ISSUE

REF: VIENNA 1474

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SPECIAL CENSUS OPPONENTS OUTSIDE SLOVENIAN
MINORITY RANKS HAVE BEGUN TO RALLY IN EFFORT TO COUNTER
PRESSURES ON KREISKY FROM CARINTHIA POLITICAL PARTIES TO
HOLD CENSUS THIS YEAR. AT SAME TIME YUGOSLAVIA HAS CONTINUED
STEADY DRUMFIRE AGAINST GOA ON CENSUS. RESULT
HAS BEEN ANOTHER SHIFT IN TIMING BY KREISKY FROM EARLIER
COMMITMENT TO SPECIAL CENSUS IN 1976, USING DUBIOUS ARGUMENT
THAT STATISTICAL OFFICE WOULD REQUIRE MORE THAN YEAR TO
PREPARE SPECIAL CENSUS ONCE GUIDELINES, WHICH STILL OUT-
STANDING, HAVE BEEN RECEIVED. MFA SENIOR OFFICIALS VIEW
WITH SOME CONCERN CONFUSING SIGNALS BEING GIVEN YUGOSLAVIA
ON ISSUE AND ARE FRUSTRATED IN THEIR INABILITY TO GET FONMIN
TO MAKE CASE WITH KREISKY FOR PROMPT AND DECISIVE ACTION ONE
WAY OR OTHER ON ISSUE. SAME OFFICIALS ADMIT HOWEVER THAT
KREISKY'S POLICY OF VACILLATION ON ISSUE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE.
END SUMMARY.

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2. KREISKY IS BEING SUBJECT TO INCREASINGLY SEVERE POLI-

TICAL BUFFETING AS HE TRIES TO MANEUVER AMONG AVAILABLE FEW OPTIONS IN HANDLING OF SLOVENIAN MINORITY ISSUE IN CARINTHIA, PARTICULARLY AS IT CONCERNS DEMANDS BY CARINTHIAN NATIONALISTS FOR SPECIAL CENSUS OF MINORITY PRIOR TO ERECTION OF BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS. OPPONENTS OF SPECIAL CENSUS WHICH WAS AGREED UPON IN PRINCIPLE AT FEBRUARY 20 MEETING IN VIENNA CHAIRED BY KREISKY (REFTEL) ARE NOW GOING PUBLIC IN EFFORT TO RALLY OPPOSITION TO CENSUS. INITIAL COUNTERMOVE WAS TAKEN BY AUSTRIAN COUNCIL OF CARINTHIA LAYMEN'S ORGANIZATION ON FEBRUARY 28 WHEN IT REGISTERED ITS OPPOSITION TO CENSUS AND CALLED FOR GRANTING OF FULL MINORITY RIGHTS AS SET FORTH IN ARTICLE 7 OF STATE TREATY. ON MARCH 1 AN ACTION COMMITTEE IN DEFENSE OF SLOVENE RIGHTS, WHICH WAS RECENTLY FORMED IN VIENNA, ISSUED PUBLIC DECLARATION SIGNED BY 240 PERSONS FROM ALL SEGMENTS OF AUSTRIAN SOCIETY (INCLUDING AMONG OTHERS YOUNG SOCIALIST LEADER KONECNY, PEOPLE'S PARTY SECRETARY FOR STYRIA SCHILCHER AND PETER KREISKY, SON OF CHANCELLOR), REJECTING SPECIAL MINORITY CENSUS AND APPEALING TO GOA TO FULFILL IN ITS ENTIRETY ARTICLE 7 OF TREATY.

3. AT SAME TIME REPRESENTATIVES OF CARINTHIAN MINORITY HAVE CONTINUED THEIR UNYIELDING OPPOSITION TO SPECIAL CENSUS, DESCRIBING IT AS VIOLATION OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND AS EFFORT TO REVISE UNILATERALLY 1955 STATE TREATY. AUSTRIAN PRESS HAS CONTINUED TO REPORT WHAT APPEARS TO BE STEADY DRUMFIRE OF OPPOSITION FROM YUGOSLAVIA ON SAME ISSUE. VIENNA PRESS ALSO NOTED PROTEST LETTER TO KREISKY FROM FEDERAL UNION OF EUROPEAN ETHNIC GROUP WHICH TERMED SPECIAL CENSUS "GREAT STEP BACKWARD" IN TREATMENT OF MINORITIES AND VIOLATION OF STATE TREATY AND HELSINKI ACCORD.

4. IN FACE OF GROWING OPPOSITION TO SPECIAL CENSUS, KREISKY HAS BACKED OFF AGAIN ON TIMING OF CENSUS BY HAVING CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE, WHICH COMES UNDER CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, ANNOUNCE ON MARCH 3 THAT SPECIAL CENSUS UNLIKELY THIS YEAR BECAUSE IT HAS NOT YET RECEIVED ANY INSTRUCTIONS FOR CENSUS WHICH IN ANY CASE WOULD REQUIRE MORE THAN YEAR FOR PREPARATION. AS PART OF HIS ZIG-ZAG, INCREASINGLY OPPORTUNISTIC APPROACH TO DEALING WITH ISSUE, KREISKY WAS QUOTED THAT PARLIAMENT, WHICH NOW SEIZED WITH DRAFT BILL ON SUBJECT,

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HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIXING DETAILS AND DATES OF CENSUS WITH STATISTICAL OFFICE.

5. MOST RECENT EMBASSY DISCUSSION OF ISSUE WITH SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS INDICATES THAT MFA HAS NOT YET RECEIVED AND DOES NOT ANTICIPATE RECEIVING ANY DOCUMENTS FROM CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE ON KREISKY-TITO CONVERSATION ON ISSUE AT END OF DECEMBER 1975 AT BRDO, YUGOSLAVIA AND THAT MFA THEREFORE

IS NOT IN POSITION TO MAKE ANY EVALUATION OF YUGOSLAV
CONTENTION THAT SOME SORT OF COMMITMENT ON ISSUE HAD BEEN
MADE BY KREISKY. MFA OFFICIALS WHO HAVE SEEN FEBRUARY 20
AGREEMENT OF THREE AUSTRIAN POLITICAL PARTIES ON CENSUS
DESCRIBED IT AS INCOMPLETE AND OPEN TO VARIOUS INTERPRE-
TATIONS REGARDING 25 PERCENT REQUIREMENT. THESE OFFICIALS
ARE DISCOURAGED BY THEIR INABILITY TO GET FONMIN BIELKA, WHO
IS FAITHFUL IMPLEMENTOR OF KREISKY DESIGNS IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
TO FOCUS ON NEED FROM AUSTRIAN FOREIGN POLICY INTEREST
VIEWPOINT OF GETTING CLEARLY DEFINED DECISION FROM
KREISKY SETTING FORTH CONDITIONS AND SPECIFIC DATE FOR
CENSUS. MFA FEELING IS ONE OF SOME FRUSTRATION OVER REFUSAL
OF KREISKY AND IN TURN OF FONMIN TO GIVE SUFFICIENT
ATTENTION TO FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS VIS-A-VIS
YUGOSLAVIA OF ZIG-ZAG APPROACH TO ISSUE. IN SPITE
OF MFA CONCERN, HOWEVER, KREISKY'S PROPENSITY TO PRO-
CRASTINATE ON MATTER IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE.BUCHANAN

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